

TITLE

Method and Apparatus for Storing and Preserving Writings and Memoranda

BACKGROUND

[0001] Many people obtain objects throughout their lives that hold some sort of sentimental value or personal worth. Quite often, these people will hand down such objects to another member of the family as a means of remembering them. This passing down of heirlooms continues from generation to generation within a family.

[0002] Furniture pieces are often used as heirlooms. Furniture can include sofas, desks, tables, entertainment centers, bookcases, nightstands, chairs, lamps, or any other item used to furnish an area. Furniture may be used outdoors such as on a patio, deck or lawn, or indoors such as in an office, living room, kitchen, bedroom, etc. Generally, a piece of furniture is designed to fill a particular function. For example, a couch allows one or more people to sit; a lamp on the other hand is designed to illuminate an area. A piece of furniture may also be designed simply as a decorative piece.

[0003] Often, a piece of furniture is handcrafted, uniquely designed, antique and/or rare. Many times a piece of furniture has been in a family for generations, passed on from one member to the next. In such cases, the furniture piece is, understandably, quite valuable to its owner. It provides a link to family members who once lived, a means of preserving their past.

[0004] Writings, drawings, paintings and the like are also methods of preserving the past. Writing and other forms of marking have been used as means of communication for thousands of years. A place, time, event, etc. may be recorded through the use of descriptive words and phrases. Writing and other types of marking can also be used to record a person's characteristics, achievements, or simply the day-to-day occurrences of their life. Similar to the aforementioned piece of furniture, writings and other recordings may also be passed on within a family for generations, thus providing a link to the past. In this way, these writings and other recordings become heirlooms within a family.

SUMMARY

[0005] The present invention provides a method and system for preserving and recording writings and other memoranda on a piece of furniture.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] The accompanying drawings illustrate various embodiments of the present invention and are a part of the specification. The illustrated embodiments are merely examples of the present invention and do not limit the scope of the invention.

[0007] Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a piece of furniture containing one set of sliding drawers according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0008] Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a piece of furniture illustrating one of the sliding drawers pulled out according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0009] Fig. 3 is a perspective view of a piece of furniture containing two sets of sliding drawers according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0010] Fig. 4 is a perspective view of a piece of furniture illustrating two of the sliding drawers pulled out according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0011] Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a piece of furniture illustrating the two upper drawers pulled out according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0012] Fig. 6 is a perspective view of a trunk containing one set of drawers according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0013] Fig. 7 is a perspective view of an end table containing one set of drawers according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0014] Fig. 8 is a top view illustrating two different sizes of surfaces or "tablets" placed in or on the furniture according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0015] Fig. 9 illustrates a top, front, and side view for a piece of furniture containing one set of sliding drawers or tablets and a storage compartment.

[0016] Throughout the drawings, identical reference numbers designate similar, but not necessarily identical, elements.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0017] This specification describes a method and system for storing and preserving writings and memoranda to enhance the value of an heirloom. The writings and memoranda may be stored and preserved in a variety of methods. In one embodiment, the writings will be stored in and/or on a piece of furniture specifically designed for storing such writings. As used herein and in the claims, "writings" may include, but are not limited to, handwritten letters, words, phrases, names, initials, signatures, drawings, sketches, paintings, or any other form of markings. Writings may be made, for example, with any one or more of the following: pencil, pen, marker, paintbrush, woodburning tool, carving tool, etching tool, brush, imprint, stamp, etc. As will be described below, the writing surface may be any type of wood, plastic, metal, ceramic, marble or other material, which may be marked.

[0018] In one embodiment, the writings may be organized, stored and preserved in a piece of furniture. More specifically, the writings may be stored on planks, tablets or drawers built into, on or attached to (e.g., hinged to) the piece of furniture. As mentioned earlier, the piece of furniture may incorporate the design and shape of any type of furniture, used for any purpose. This may include, but is not limited to, a desk, dresser, armoire, bookcase, nightstand, table, chair, couch, chest, entertainment center, etc. It is also conceivable that such writings may be stored in and/or on a plank, cabinet, tablet, drawer, or any other part of, or attachment to, a piece of furniture. Such a system of planks, tablets or drawers designed to store writings may also be added to previously existing pieces of furniture.

[0019] As shown in Fig. 1, a piece of furniture (101) may be specifically designed to store and preserve writings and memoranda. The piece of furniture (101) may be designed in any number of shapes or sizes. In this embodiment, the piece of furniture is a table (101). The table (101) includes a set (110) of boards or planks (105) that can, for example, slide in and out of the table (101). In addition to the planks (105) or tablets (820, Fig. 8) a number of drawers (106, Fig. 3), or any combination of planks, tablets and drawers, may be used to provide a writing surface on which memoranda may be recorded. As will be explained below, the drawers, tablets and planks may be manufactured in any number of length, width,

and height combinations. Each drawer (106, Fig. 3) or plank (105) may have one or more knobs (120), handles or finger holds to facilitate pulling out the drawer or plank.

[0020] The piece of furniture (101) may include some type of decoration (115 and 820, Fig. 8), as illustrated on the top of the table in Fig. 1. This decoration may be, for example, carving, writing, an imprinted or laser induced impression, or inserts. In the illustrated embodiment, the decorative design (115) is an inlay made up of four rows of diagonally arranged slats. There is no limit to the size, type, quantity, form, etc. of the decorative features.

[0021] The planks (105) and drawers (106, Fig. 3) may be specifically designed to accept and store writings. These writings may be the name of a person, his or her signature, and/or the date. The writings may also include other words, genealogical forms, historical event formats and phrases describing the person, an event, or time of significance. The writings may be written on the surface of the drawer with a writing instrument. Alternatively, the writings may be carved, burned, chiseled, drawn, etched, stamped, laser carved, painted, or otherwise marked onto the surface of the plank (105), tablet (820, Fig. 8) or drawer (106, Fig. 3). The piece of furniture (101) serves as a protection to the writings, thus preserving them for future generations.

[0022] In another embodiment, the writings may be written on a medium other than the surface of the plank (105) or drawer (106, Fig. 3). These writings may be made on a medium having a writing surface that has been attached to the plank (105) or drawer (106, Fig. 3). The writing surface may be affixed to the plank (105), tablet (820, Fig. 8) or drawer (106, Fig. 3) with an adhesive of any type.

[0023] The piece of furniture (101) may also be associated with a set of instructions (130) that explain the intended use of the plank, tablet or drawer as a surface to receive writings or other markings that record history, e.g., the history of the furniture owner or owners. The furniture (101) may be offered for sale with the instructions (130) associated with the furniture, e.g., tied, taped or secured to the furniture or displayed with the furniture.

[0024] As shown in Fig. 2, the planks (105) of the table of Fig. 1 may be pulled out to expose the writing surface (103). Each plank (105), tablet (820, Fig. 8) or drawer (106, Fig. 3) may be pulled out independent of the other planks or drawers. In the illustrated

embodiment, each plank (105) or drawer (106, Fig. 3) is provided with knobs (120) to facilitate pulling out and pushing in the plank (105) or drawer (106, Fig. 3).

[0025] As stated previously, the set (110) of planks, tablets or drawers may include any number of planks and/or drawers based on the design of the piece of furniture. In some embodiments, each plank (105) or drawer (106) is equipped with two slides, runners or pads one on each side, to facilitate the sliding of the plank or drawer in and out of the piece of furniture.

[0026] As illustrated in Fig. 3, a piece of furniture may be designed according to the principles disclosed herein as a table (301) having two sets of planks (105) and drawers (106). It is not necessary that each set of drawers (106) and planks (105) be identical to, or even symmetrical to, the other. Each set of drawers (106) and planks (105) may comprise any number of drawers and planks, drawers only, or planks only. In this embodiment, an alternative decorative design is illustrated (315). This decorative design (315) is made up of an inlay of two horizontal rows of vertical slats.

[0027] Figures 4 & 5 illustrate the table shown in Fig. 3 (301) in greater detail. In Fig. 4, two of the planks (105), one from each of the two sets of drawers (106) and planks (105), are pulled out. In Fig. 5, two of the drawers (106) are pulled out. As will be explained below, each plank (105) or drawer (106) may have lines, grooves or other marks that are provided to assist with the organization of writings made on that plank (105) or drawer (106). For example, when a person is writing a memorandum on the plank (105) or in the drawer (106), the lines, grooves or other marks may be used to align the writing in the same way as would printed lines on a piece of writing paper.

[0028] In the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 6, the piece of furniture is designed to be a chest (601). While the chest could include any number of drawers, tablets or planks, the illustrated design includes one drawer (106) and a set of four planks (105). The set of planks or tablets (105) provide writing surfaces that may be exposed or removed to record events, names and other markings. The knobs (120) are similar to those in Fig. 1, both in shape and function and may be replaced by handles or finger holds.

[0029] Fig. 7 illustrates an alternative embodiment where the piece of furniture is an end table (701). Again, the end table could include any number of drawers or planks as

described herein, or have the form of a lamp table, a telephone stand, or an occasional table. The illustrated end table (701) has one drawer (106) and a set of seven planks (107).

[0030] Fig. 8 illustrates a couple of differently sized planks or tablets that could be inserted into pieces of furniture to provide a place for recording memoranda as described above. As shown in Fig. 8, the tablets may come in a number of sizes, depending on the size of the piece of furniture.

[0031] Each plank (105) or drawer (106) may be marked with lines, grooves or other markings for organizing writings on the plank or drawer. These markings may simply be horizontal lines or may include, for example, a form for recording familial relationships, such as a family tree, pedigree chart, family group record, etc. In some cases, a piece of furniture may be owned by a business and used to record the history of the business as opposed to the history of a family. In such a case, these markings may also include a form for recording a business organization or hierarchy. Planks or tablets may also be fastened to the furniture by means of hinges, leather, fittings or any other connecting method or device.

[0032] Fig. 9 illustrates a top view (901), front view (902), and a side view (903) of a piece of furniture, which is a chest or trunk. The top view (901) illustrates a set of planks and drawers (110), and a storage compartment (910). The storage compartment (910) may be used to store various objects. In some embodiments, the memorabilia stored in the compartment (910) may have some association with memoranda written on the planks (105). Memorabilia stored may include, but is not limited to, clothing, jewelry, books, heirlooms, keepsakes and any other items of importance or personal significance used to remember someone by.

[0033] The front view (902) illustrates a set (110) of planks (105) and a drawer (106). Each plank (105) and drawer (106) preferably has its own knobs (120) or handles or finger holds for pulling out and pushing in the planks and drawers. The side view (903) shows the storage compartment (910), along with the planks (105), drawers (106) and knobs (120).

[0034] The preceding description has been presented only to illustrate and describe embodiments of invention. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to any precise form disclosed. Many modifications and variations are possible in

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light of the above teaching. It is intended that the scope of the invention be defined by the following claims.